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THE SHINE OF *THE SHINING*: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND DETERMINISTIC TRAUMA

by

ASHLEIGH BOUTWELL

Under the Direction of Christopher Kocela, PhD

ABSTRACT

Whether reading Stephen King's *The Shining* or viewing Stanley Kubrick's adaptation the prevalence of domestic violence is indisputable. Following the lives of Jack, Wendy, and Danny Torrance a relationship between domestic violence becomes evident. Fear is provoked by the violence depicted on page and screen, spurring characters into action determined by the trauma they have experienced. Past violence refuses to be ignored or buried and disrupts an individual's notion of identity and safety. Such characteristics of trauma are depicted throughout Stephen King's novel and Kubrick's film, illustrating how perpetrators and victims of violence operate and survive. *The Shine of The Shining: Domestic Violence and Deterministic Trauma* sets out to explore the relationship between domestic violence and trauma and uncover how one's past can determine their future.

INDEX WORDS: Stephen King, Stanley Kubrick, *The Shining*, trauma, domestic violence

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ASHLEIGH BOUTWELL

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Ashleigh Boutwell
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1 A BRIEF GLIMPSE INTO TRAUMA, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, AND THEIR CONNECTIVITY IN STEPHEN KING'S *THE SHINING*

Terror as black as midnight swept through her. She looked over her shoulder and saw Jack getting slowly to his feet. His back was bowed over, and she could see the handle of the kitchen knife sticking out of it. His eyes seemed to have contracted, almost to have lost themselves in the pale, sagging folds of the skin around them. He was grasping the roque mallet loosely in his left hand. The end of it was bloody. (King, *The Shining*, 590)

The above passage from Stephen King's *The Shining* paints a picture in readers' of a picture of a crazed, lost man intent on harm. Through these words is revealed a man who seems determined to follow through with a violent act he has already initiated. This passage perfectly captures the essence of domestic violence – its inescapability and its resulting trauma. The fear that arises from such a picture comes into existence through the knowledge that such brutality surrounds everyone. The inhumane picture painted from Stephen King's words may not remain merely fictional. Today, individuals view domestic violence as an unacceptable facet of life, and while violence encompasses us all, be it through film, television, novels, video games, news outlets, etc., there are many of us who desire to turn a blind eye to such acts until they are literally knocking at our back door. So many frown at the representations of mental, emotional, and physical abuse seen in television, film, and video games. Sympathy arises when novels and news stations reveal how countless individuals continue to be tormented by the fists, words, and actions of others. At the end of the day, however, there are many who consider themselves to be untouchable when they consider domestic violence and how it affects them. Society views violence as undesirable and intolerable, wanting to ignore its presence until direct contact is made. Aptly stated, "If a society is living in fear of violence then this violence must surely be

unacceptable, and similarly if an individual is living in fear of violence then that action itself must be unacceptable” (Keeling and Mason 2). To understand the fear and trauma that arises from domestic violence, or simply from the presence and thought of it, we must understand the prevalence of domestic violence in our society along with how and why trauma becomes a result of such brutality.

The Center for Family Justice defines domestic violence as “ a pattern of coercive, controlling behavior that is a pervasive life-threatening crime affecting people in all our communities regardless of gender, age, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, social standing and immigration status” (“What is Domestic Violence?”). The organization makes it known that “[d]omestic violence takes many forms: physical; emotional; economic; stalking and harassment; and sexual” (What is Domestic Violence?). Domestic violence affects individuals from all walks of life and does not simply denote physical violence towards another individual; it encompasses any type of abuse that exerts power and control over a victim, forcing them to remain in an unsafe, mentally and physically damaging relationship and environment. In 2010, the Centers for Disease Control found that “[n]early half of all women and men in the United States have experienced psychological aggression by an intimate partner in their lifetime” (The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey). The Office on Women’s Health finds that “[c]hildren who witness violence between parents may also be at greater risk of being violent in their future relationships” (Effects of domestic violence on children). All of these statistics highlight the prevalence of domestic violence in the United States; they allow us to see how likely we are to encounter domestic violence or become acquainted with a victim of the act. The number of men, women, and children affected by domestic violence illustrates that the crime does not favor one gender, one ethnicity, or one age range; as harrowing a fact as it is, domestic

violence can affect individuals from all walks of life who never imagined falling victim to an abuser. If we return to the passage included at the beginning of this chapter, in which Jack Torrance maniacally rises to chase his wife, Wendy, we see how such words grip at the hearts of individuals, evoking a feeling of fear that, perhaps, one day we might find ourselves on the receiving end of such violence. The trauma that results from such a scene of violence leaves readers with a feeling of dread and amazement - dread that such an act can take place, and amazement at the knowledge that such an occurrence might be commonplace for the unfortunate populace that has and continues to experience cruelty at the hands of those they love.

To understand the fear provoked by images and knowledge of domestic violence, one must first grasp the concept of trauma and learn how and why trauma goes hand in hand with the act of violence. In *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*, Bessel van der Kolk gives readers the ability to understand why traumatic events have such a profound effect on individuals and communities. Van der Kolk explains that “traumatic experiences do leave traces,” and he reveals that “[t]rauma, whether it is the result of something done to you or something you yourself have done, almost always makes it difficult to engage in intimate relationships” (1, 13). Van der Kolk’s statements explain the fear that can result from either direct contact with domestic violence or from simply thinking of the act. When we read, see, or hear of another’s confrontations with domestic violence, whether fictional or not, a fear arises from this new knowledge; this is the knowledge that a person’s true colors may not show until one solitary action thrusts them into exposing their true self. By reading, listening to others, or watching television or movies, we are forced to attune ourselves to the horrors lurking in the world; while these horrors may at one point have been unimaginable, simply picturing them in our minds transforms the unimaginable into the inescapable. The knowledge of traumatic

experiences, as Van der Kolk states, leaves a mark, but that mark does not necessarily have to be the mark of actually experiencing a traumatic event.

Trauma opens doorways into the unknown, illustrating how the past or that which was once ignored can overwhelm an individual. Roger Luckhurst reveals how a traumatic event or period of one's life damages victims and illustrates how traumatic after-effects may reveal themselves at the drop of a hat or slowly through graduated stages. Luckhurst states that "[t]rauma violently opens passageways between systems that were once discrete, making unforeseen connections that distress or confound" (*The Trauma Question* 3). By opening ourselves up to the idea of trauma, to the knowledge that violence can happen in our own home, we realize the weight of violence and come to grasp a basic understanding of the trauma that results from it, specifically on a domestic level. Luckhurst believes that "trauma disrupts memory, and therefore identity," and reveals that "[t]rauma also appears to be worryingly transmissible" in that it retains the ability to leak between "victims and their listeners or viewers who are commonly moved to forms of overwhelming sympathy, even to the extent of claiming secondary victimhood" (1, 3). With these statements, Luckhurst details how the trauma experienced by others, even fictional characters, can disrupt our notion of identity and our safety, while pushing us to sympathize with those whose experiences do not line up with our own. Van der Kolk develops this point by mentioning that "[t]rauma affects not only those who are directly exposed to it, but also those around them," reiterating how a person is not required to be in direct contact with a traumatic event to feel its effects. It becomes clear through the words of such scholars that simply sympathizing with victims of domestic violence can incite fear, can lead one to envision the traumatic experiences that others have witnessed or fallen victim to, and, in particular cases, can cause trauma for outsiders.

Domestic violence, whether directly or indirectly experienced, possesses the ability to disrupt and leaves visible and invisible marks. Envisioning victims and acts of domestic violence and traumatic events, as Cathy Caruth states, “unsettles and forces us to rethink our notions of experience” (4). Hearing and experiencing trauma completely turns our ideas of the world upside down. The world can no longer be viewed as a safe place; we now know that the evil and danger might lurk at every turn and bend, that a person is capable of masking their true self and that someone who is supposed to love and protect us might be capable of the greatest harm.

Returning both to Luckhurst and the passage that began this chapter, when we read of such violence or perceive it through our own eyes or the eyes of others, “[we] are overwhelmed by the index of violence, by what is denoted, and all the symbolic, aesthetic or ideological connotations of the image fall away: [we] drop the book in horror at what [we] have *just been shown*”

(Luckhurst, *The Trauma Question*, 166). Immersing ourselves in scenes that define domestic violence intrudes upon the mind, and long after the book or movie has been put away or ended, such scenes take over our imaginations, inciting fear. Just hearing firsthand accounts or reading about fictional experiences of domestic violence can capture our attention and catch us by surprise; we can be overtaken by the horror of the image lying before us and, at times, become overwhelmed with a sense of foreboding at what could be ahead in our futures. In turn, we begin to see how the simple notion of domestic violence and the trauma produced from it reach out to grasp all who come into contact with it, exposing us to an unimaginable, terrifying world and providing us with an idea of how some individuals – perpetrators and victims – operate and survive.

In this thesis I seek to explore how Stephen King’s *The Shining* and Stanley Kubrick’s film adaptation of King’s novel portray the relationship between domestic violence and trauma.

As previous scholars have noted, trauma is one out of many themes found throughout King's writings and their film and television adaptations. When *The Shining* first hit bookstores, *The Nashville Banner*, quoted on the back of the 2013 publication of the novel, declared King's work "a chilling novel [that] will haunt you, and make your blood run cold and your heart race with fear." Stanley Kubrick's film garnered similar notes when a film critic for *People* likened it to "a near-miss auto accident: You don't know how scared you really were until you start shaking a few hours later" (Staff 1980). Roger Luckhurst discusses the paranoia evoked by Kubrick's film, stating that "*The Shining* does to its viewers what the hotel does to its visitors – it makes them shine on things glimpsed that were perhaps never there, or were there all along, hiding in plain sight" (*The Shining* 11). All of these critics touch on the fear and trauma provoked by the novel and film, but what they are missing is a focus on the issue that induces such fear – the domestic violence illustrated throughout the mediums.

Many critics gloss over the portrayal of domestic violence in both King's novel and Kubrick's adaptation of *The Shining*. Geoffrey Cocks focuses his discussion of the film on how it reveals the horror of the natural world and represents the persecution of Native Americans and Jews (79, 81). Mathias Clasen comes to the conclusion that "King's fiction contains an unflinching acknowledgment of pain and suffering and evil in the world," an observation that falls in line with numerous critics and scholars of King (77). Research is lacking, however, when one wishes to observe how and why the domestic violence depicted in King's and Kubrick's work resonates so deeply and intimately with readers and viewers. Elizabeth Jean Hornbeck is one of the few critics to have touched on the domestic violence depicted in King's works. Hornbeck finds that "[w]hile family dramas broadly elicit audience sympathy or pity for victims of abuse, the horror genre more directly invites audience identification with the victims, and thus

allows viewers – including male viewers – to experience the visceral fear the abuser strikes in his family members” (691). Hornbeck hits the nail on the head by touching on how the audience identifies with characters found in the horror genre, but further discussion remains warranted in order to discover how violence is transferred from character to character and from character to reader. What is missing from the work of scholars such as Hornbeck, Clasen, and Cocks is the connection between domestic violence and trauma, and how connecting the violence illustrated on page and screen translates into an experience of trauma for both characters and viewers. In this thesis I will argue that the lasting power of King’s novel and Kubrick’s film resides in their portrayal of trauma as capable of transference from victim to victim as well as from victims to outsiders.

The trauma depicted in Stephen King’s *The Shining* and Stanley Kubrick’s film adaptation gains traction from the domestic violence portrayed and recalled throughout the storylines. The unveiling of characters’ violent pasts and predictions of even more violent futures propels the characters of both novel and film into action, revealing how trauma shapes the lives of its victims and remains an irreversible and ineradicable facet of life. In these texts trauma becomes deterministic; whether the abuse suffered is physical or mental, it affects the lives of the Torrance family on a collective and individual basis. Furthermore, the domestic violence depicted on the page and screen goes further than simply disrupting the lives of fictional characters; it disrupts the reader’s notion of the world by revealing the malevolence of some in a believable and disturbing fashion. When the domestic violence of the past meets the supernatural there is no recovery. The supernatural uncovers and drives characters into action, forcing them to confront past traumas and attempt to understand their responses to violence. This project, aptly titled *The Shine of The Shining: Domestic Violence and Deterministic Trauma*, aims to reveal

how the domestic violence depicted in *The Shining*, both novel and film, has a traumatic and deterministic effect on the fictional characters of the tale while reshaping consumers' notions of the depravity and evil that exists in the world. What do we learn by observing the domestic violence that members of the Torrance family have witnessed and experienced? How has such violence affected their mannerisms and habits? How do individuals viewing or reading the story react to the distressing images composed by the plot(s)? By analyzing *The Shining* as a novel and a film I hope to uncover how and why the actions of the Torrance family members are a result of the domestic violence they have been subjected to, have become victims of, and have inflicted on others while illustrating why *The Shining* remains one of the most harrowing yet believable fictional accounts of violence readers and moviegoers have experienced. What *The Shining* unveils is the way domestic violence, in all its forms, has traumatic consequences, sending characters, viewers, and readers on an unsettling, emotional rollercoaster from which there is no return.

In an attempt to answer the questions posed above, this project will be broken down into two main chapters excluding the introduction and conclusion. The first chapter, titled "A Not So Picture Perfect Family: Domestic Violence and the Torrance Family in Stephen King's *The Shining*," will provide readers with an in-depth look at the actions of Jack, Wendy, and Danny as they are represented in King's novel. The chapter will include summaries of what might be considered the most important moments in the development of each character, which I will analyze in keeping with my thesis, shaped by Van der Kolk, Luckhurst, and Caruth that domestic violence has a transferable, and sometimes deterministic, effect on subjects' actions. The final chapter, "The Affliction of Violence: Kubrick's *The Shining* and the Torrance Family's Ability to Cope with Trauma," will analyze Stanley Kubrick's 1980 adaptation of King's work. As with

the first, this chapter will breakdown significant scenes of each character's development in order to examine their depiction of the transferable nature of domestic violence in and on the Torrance family. These two chapters will aim to establish a relationship between violence and trauma and demonstrate how the trauma that results from moments of barbarity impact individuals throughout their lives. In the end, I hope to reveal how the Torrance family copes with violence in differing ways, describing how their reactions to individual and collective traumas are based on their ability to make sense of and begin to recover from the violence spread throughout their lives.

2 A NOT SO PICTURE PERFECT FAMILY: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND THE TORRANCE FAMILY IN STEPHEN KING'S *THE SHINING*

Stephen King is a prolific author responsible for some of the most popular horror novels and short stories to hit the stands over the past five decades. A novel that is forty-two years old, King's *The Shining* is one of his most enduring publications and has been terrorizing readers since it was published. A novel that evokes fear, paranoia, horror, disgust, and sadness, *The Shining* provides readers and scholars with numerous themes, scenes, and characters worthy of attention and research. What readers find within the pages is an overarching representation of domestic violence represented as an act that affects multiple generations and spans decades. In an attempt to understand why King's work resonates with so many, I will attempt to unpack some of the most important and memorable depictions of domestic violence found within this tale about a family experiencing an alarming level of isolation.

The tale of the Torrance family's demise begins with Jack Torrance's interview for winter caretaker at the Overlook Hotel. Throughout his interview with the hotel's manager,

Stuart Ullman, King makes certain that Jack and readers see that the Overlook is no stranger to violence. Ullman warns Jack of the cabin fever that can result from the isolation exerted by the harsh winters in the mountains of Colorado. Jack's remark on cabin fever instills a sense of foreboding in readers as he mentions how "[t]he feeling of claustrophobia is externalized as dislike for the people you happen to be shut in with. In extreme cases it can result in hallucinations and violence – murder has been done over such minor things as a burned meal or an argument about whose turn it is to do the dishes" (King, *The Shining*, 12). Readers' apprehension only escalates when Ullman reveals the story of a previous caretaker, Delbert Grady. He mentions "[h]e moved into the quarters you and your wife and son will be sharing. He had a wife and two daughters. I had reservations, the main ones being the harshness of the winter season and the fact that the Gradys would be cut off from the outside world for five to six months" (King, *The Shining*, 10). Finally revealing what happened to the Grady family, Ullman tells Jack that Grady "killed them, Mr. Torrance, and then committed suicide. He murdered the little girls with a hatchet, his wife with a shotgun, and himself the same way. His leg was broken. Undoubtedly so drunk he fell downstairs" (King, *The Shining*, 12). Stuart Ullman's retelling of the misfortune that befell the Grady family serves not only as a warning, an acknowledgement of what can befall a family trapped within the Overlook's walls, but as a reminder that violence lurks around every corner and can strike anyone at anytime.

Stephen King begins *The Shining* with the stories of families' and individuals' pasts dominated by domestic violence. In his memoir, *On Writing*, King states, "Good fiction always begins with story and progresses to theme; it almost never begins with theme and progresses to story" (207). While the demise of the Grady family begins a journey through tales of domestic violence it also serves to establish the key theme of *The Shining* from the onset. In *The Trauma*

Question, Roger Luckhurst describes abuse as “the shattering event that lies buried and forgotten, yet pristinely preserved,” an apt way to frame what Ullman recounts as the tragedy of the Grady family (40). The reader soon begins to wonder how many Overlook employees are aware of the events that transpired that winter. Have subsequent winter caretakers been told the same account Ullman relays to Jack? How many guests have walked through the doors of the Overlook Hotel without the slightest clue about what has taken place on its grounds? Ullman’s retelling serves as one of the many shattering events that have been forgotten but preserved in the memories of those privy to such knowledge. For Ullman, Delbert Grady’s murder-suicide will remain “pristinely preserved” while standing as an event that is better off “buried and forgotten” (Luckhurst, *The Trauma Question*, 40). Grady’s story erases all notions of the Overlook as a place of retreat and a haven from the toils and trouble of city life. The fate of the Gradys illustrates the debasing qualities of violence, allowing Ullman and the reader to realize that violence can strike at the most inopportune moments and victimize the most unsuspecting and undeserving of people.

While Stuart Ullman’s disclosure might have convinced some that a prolonged stay at the Overlook was an unwise path to tread, Jack Torrance distances himself from Delbert Grady. Jack ensures Ullman, “[m]y wife and I both like to read. I have a play to work on . . . Danny has his puzzles, his coloring books, and his crystal radio . . . Oh yes, I think we can keep busy and out of each other’s hair if the TV goes on the fritz” (King, *The Shining*, 13). Jack does his utmost to convince Ullman that he is a much a better fit for the caretaker position than Delbert Grady, making sure Ullman is aware that he “no longer drink[s],” distinguishing himself even further from a man who drunkenly committed a triple murder before taking his own life (King, *The Shining*, 13). Yet two things become evident during Jack’s discussion with Ullman: first, Jack is

not as removed from Delbert Grady as he believes; and second, Ullman tells Jack the story about the Gradys because he has reservations about Jack Torrance not so dissimilar to the ones he felt for the former caretaker. Jack painting himself as a man too intelligent to fall victim to cabin fever is King's foreshadowing of the novel's plot; the author here shows his determination to reveal how even the most intelligent of men is not above violence. Jack talks of "a stupid man" who has "[n]othing to do but bitch at his wife and nag at the kids and drink. It gets hard to sleep because there's nothing to hear. So he drinks himself to sleep and wakes up with a hangover. He gets edgy. And maybe the telephone goes out and the TV aerial blows down and there's nothing to do but think and cheat at solitaire and get edgier and edgier" (King, *The Shining*, 13). What the reader gleans from the conversation between Jack and Ullman is a feeling that Jack has sealed his fate and taken a path that, no matter how far-fetched it may seem to him, will lead him in a similar direction to the one taken by Delbert Grady.

Soon afterward, the reader sees the first signs of danger lurking within the halls of the Overlook Hotel. It quickly becomes apparent that the establishment manipulates, scars, and transforms its visitors, pushing them towards violence and away from sanity. When it comes to viewing and understanding how the Torrance family is altered during their stay we must first comprehend their preceding lives; only upon knowing of their separate and combined pasts can we see how their actions and thoughts have been and will be influenced by what they have borne witness to. Psychiatrist and author Bessel Van der Kolk observes that "traumatic experiences do leave traces, whether on a large scale (on our histories and cultures) or close to home, on our families, with dark secrets being imperceptibly passed down through generation" (1). I have already portrayed the story of Delbert Grady as a trauma that solidifies itself in the Overlook's history, ultimately amounting to a trauma that can affect anyone privy to knowledge about it.

Concerning the Torrance family, I will argue that trauma has also been passed down through the generations, leaving invisible and visible marks on its victims that strongly influence their decisions.

Jack Torrance is a character who exhibits signs of being deeply attuned to violence and the trauma that results from it. Even in the beginning, during Jack's interview with Ullman, King hints at Jack's wavering instability, showing the reader that Jack is on the precipice of something though what he stands on the edge of is as yet unknown. Doing his best to impress Ullman, Jack "[flashes] the PR smile again, large and insultingly toothy," and even though "[h]e was getting very tired of Mr. Stuart Ullman," he lets the manager know he harbors "[n]o hard feelings," keeping it to himself that "[t]here were hard feelings. All kinds of them" (King, *The Shining*, 7, 13). At first glance, Jack's aggravation is understandable, as any interviewee is likely to become annoyed by constantly being talked down to; yet as King's novel progresses the reader comes to understand that Jack's early attitude toward Ullman signifies something much greater than simple annoyance at an employer. According to Van der Kolk, "[i]t takes tremendous energy to keep functioning while carrying the memory of terror, and the shame of utter weakness and vulnerability" (2). Struggle is precisely what we witness in Jack - a struggle to maintain the façade of a reliable, well-balanced husband and father. Jack attempts to hide how deeply he is affected by his past and the truth of his unhealthy relationship with, and past dependence on, alcohol. While he succeeds in charming Ullman, the reader is allowed to see these inner thoughts, which reveal the weakness and vulnerability incited by Jack's past memories.

The night a drunken Jack broke Danny's arm is retold at the beginning of King's novel, providing the reader with a chance to observe how deeply tormented Jack is by his actions. Jack remembers how, discovering Danny standing amidst a scattering of manuscript papers, a "red

cloud of rage had eclipsed [his] reason . . . [i]t had seemed slow subjectively, inside his head, but it must have all happened in less than a minute. It only seemed slow the way some dreams seem slow. The bad ones” (King, *The Shining*, 22). The memory then hits Jack full force:

[h]e had whirled Danny around to spank him, his big adult fingers digging into the scant meat of the boy’s forearm, meeting around it in a closed fist, and the snap of the breaking bone had not been loud, not loud but it had been *very* loud, *HUGE*, but not loud. Just enough of a sound to slit through the red fog like an arrow – but instead of letting in sunlight, that sound let in the dark clouds of shame and remorse, the terror, the agonizing convulsion of the spirit. A clean sound with the past on one side of it and all the future on the other . . . A moment of utter silence, on the other side, in respect to the beginning of the future maybe, all the rest of his life. Seeing Danny’s face drain of color . . . Jack sure the boy was going to faint dead away into the puddle of beer and papers; his own voice, weak and drunk, slurry, trying to take it all back, to find *a way* round that not too loud sound of bone cracking and into the past.” (King, *The Shining*, 22-24)

Jack’s recollection of this moment unveils the reassembling of life that was forced to take place after such a violent act; yet it also anticipates the later revelation that Jack himself has a violent, childhood past, and was subjected to abuse at his father’s hands.

Concerning Jack’s childhood, King keeps readers in the dark until much farther into *The Shining*, finally divulging the violence that soils Jack’s life and jeopardizes his future. We come to understand that Jack is no stranger to brutality as he reminisces on his childhood. We learn “that the father won all his arguments with his children by use of his fists,” and one night Jack’s “father put his mother into the hospital . . . for no good reason at all, suddenly and without warning” (King, *The Shining* 329). The Overlook drives the troubled Jack Torrance further into

the realm of insanity, forcing his unforgettable, violent past to clash with the supernatural and bloodthirsty forces at work within the establishment. Voices begin to flow through Jack's head, his father's voice beckoning him towards madness and inclining him to act on the violence swirling through his mind: "-[K]ill him. You have to kill him, Jacky, and her, too . . . Then I'll go with you while you give him his medicine. I know you can do it, of course you can. You must kill him. You have to kill him, Jacky, and her, too" (King, *The Shining*, 335). The Overlook thrusts onto Jack the knowledge that although "he had cut all the father out of him and it was not right that he should come back, creeping through this hotel," trauma is inescapable; it infringes on and inflicts unforgettable scenes and images on its victims, reminding them that no matter how far they have removed themselves from the site of violence they can never truly escape (King, *The Shining*, 335).

In light of the above passages, the debilitating trauma evoked by domestic violence becomes evident in King's novel. In Jack Torrance, we see a character that exhibits symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder - a character who finally begins to weaken after decades of bearing the burden of trauma precipitated by domestic violence. Cathy Caruth defines post-traumatic stress disorder by stating "most descriptions generally agree that there is a response, sometimes delayed, to an overwhelming event or events, which takes the form of repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviors stemming from the event, along with numbing that may have begun during or after the experience, and possibly also increased arousal to (and avoidance of) stimuli recalling the event" (4).

The memories, the voices, and the thoughts that Jack experiences illustrate how the past remains ever present, regardless of the time and effort spent trying to bury what was and erase it from memory. The instability noted earlier lurking within Jack exists now as unpredictability

generated by the many facets of trauma. Caruth explains how “[t]rauma can be experienced in at least two ways: as a memory that one cannot integrate into one’s own experience, and as a catastrophic knowledge that one cannot communicate to others” (Caruth and Keenan 256). King provides no indication that Wendy or Danny are entirely aware of Jack’s previous encounters with domestic violence, highlighting the incommunicable aspect of trauma. Furthermore, the National Institute of Mental Health divulges how individuals with post-traumatic stress disorder “[avoid] thoughts or feelings related to the traumatic event,” and “[feel] tense,” or “on edge” (“Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder”). Once we begin to understand the trauma incited by domestic violence we can better comprehend why Jack’s mannerisms are not solely an indication of mental instability. There is so much weighing on his mind, so much he is attempting to keep hidden and locked away, so much horror and fear ignited by domestic violence that we begin to wonder how Jack has remained stable for so long.

Most importantly, we begin to recognize that Jack’s pathology was caused by his own childhood abuse; nearly all of his actions relate back to childhood violence, his alcoholism, his fear of failure, his horror at harming his own son, and the consternation that he will become his father. It is true that Jack is an individual teetering on the edge of a long-awaited emotional and mental breakdown, but his breakdown becomes spurred and enflamed by the Overlook Hotel, an entity which dredges up his past to propel his future. The supernatural elements of the hotel, the ghostly apparition of Lloyd, the voice of Jack’s father inviting violence, and the materialization of alcohol, exert influence over Jack Torrance. As a supernatural entity the Overlook Hotel influences the amount of trauma Jack must attempt to understand. King tells his readers “I want to put a group of characters (perhaps a pair; perhaps even just one) in some sort of predicament and then watch them try to work themselves free” (*On Writing* 164). *The Shining* introduces a

family in the midst of such a predicament as they attempt to move past previous domestic violence, but the trauma of that experience comes to a head when combined with the unnatural forces of the Overlook. The Overlook disrupts traditional notions of trauma due to its determination to incite further distress while ensuring the past is not forgotten. Judith Herman tells readers “[i]n an attempt to create some sense of safety and to control their pervasive fear, traumatized people restrict their lives” (46). By taking the job of winter caretaker, Jack is attempting to restrict his life. He likely believes that by sequestering his family in such a secluded location they will slowly and hopefully recover from their pasts, but the Overlook refuses to allow any semblance of recovery.

Jack Torrance certainly exhibits signs of possessing invisible and visible marks left by domestic violence, but he is far from the only character to do so. Wendy, Jack’s wife and Danny’s mother, conceals more than fear for her husband and son within herself. Similar to Jack, Wendy displays grievances for the past, present, and future that grow in number as King’s fictitious tale advances. Early in the narrative she weeps “[i]n grief and loss for the past, and terror of the future” (King, *The Shining*, 21). The reader soon learns that Wendy’s encounters with domestic violence fall into the categories of mental and emotional abuse and are a result of never confronting a past in which physical violence befell her. Wendy’s fear is discernible from her thoughts and actions: she suffers from a fear of failure, a fear of becoming her mother, and a fear that her happiness is temporary or a farce. Countless times she remonstrates about her mother’s utter disapproval of Jack. She considers the night Jack dropped their infant son, recalling how she “had rushed out, thinking of what her mother would think” (King, *The Shining*, 70). She recollects “her mother’s prophecy that Jack would never come to anything,” along with her mother’s constant scolding that “*Winifred, you’re not holding that baby right. Give him to*

me” (King, *The Shining*, 70-71). Perhaps more than anything, what Wendy fears is slowly becoming the woman who constantly stirred feelings of inadequacy in others and the parent who focused solely on the negative. We see her thinking of Danny’s relationship with his father, realizing “she was feeling jealous of the closeness between her husband and her son, and [feeling] ashamed. That was too close to the way her own mother might have felt . . . too close for comfort” (King, *The Shining*, 128). Repeatedly, Wendy expresses disdain at becoming her mother. She catches herself thinking the worst: “[h]ad she *wanted* to think Jack was to blame? Was she that jealous? It was the way her mother would have thought, that was the really horrible thing” (King, *The Shining*, 363). The domestic violence, mental and emotional abuse, we observe in Wendy’s past, solely at her mother’s hands, leaves her emotionally damaged and constantly reminds her that failure lurks in her future. Once we are familiar with Wendy’s past we can understand her reactions to events that take place while sequestered at the Overlook Hotel.

Van der Kolk writes that “[b]eing traumatized means continuing to organize your life as if the trauma were still going on – unchanged and immutable – as every new encounter or event is contaminated by the past” (53). We clearly see that Wendy, regardless of how she appears in the present, remains locked in her past, continuing to live in a world where her mother is always watching and always criticizing. Quite similar to Jack, Wendy illustrates the belief that “flashbacks [can] be even worse” than “the traumatic event itself” (Van der Kolk 16). Though she constantly relives the emotional, mental, and verbal abuse inflicted by her mother, her callbacks to those strenuous times accomplish more than reminding her of past trauma. Her flashbacks and preceding thoughts frighten her, demonstrating how easily she could become her mother, how simple it would be to become a mother jealous of her child showing affection to another, and how dreadful it is to imagine becoming only a failure.

Unlike Jack Torrance, however, at the end of *The Shining*, Wendy does not allow herself to be cowed by her past and the mystical forces of the Overlook. As the novel reaches its climax, what the reader sees in Wendy Torrance is a woman who transforms her fear, her trauma, and her vulnerability into a powerful tool of survival. Steven Stosney writes about overcoming emotional abuse and reveals “[p]ain is not a punishment; it motivates behavior that heals, improves, and protects” (Stosney 2008). Wendy calls on the emotional and mental pain inflicted by her mother and the psychical pain doled out by her husband to overcome her terror, to make a stand for her and Danny, and to make a statement that she will fight for her life. As readers, we are allowed the opportunity to witness this transformation: “[h]er breath whistled painfully in and out of her hurt throat. Nevertheless, she felt better than she had in days. She was alive. Having just brushed so close to death, that was precious” (King, *The Shining*, 552). With the Overlook eventually erasing every trace of the real Jack Torrance, transforming him into a sinister being ready to do its bidding, Wendy realizes that to ensure her and her son’s survival she must no longer view the monster terrorizing the halls as Jack Torrance; she must overcome her previous notions of what life is and accept that sinister evil swirls around her.

Rather than weaken at the events that have transpired, Wendy glances in the mirror and acknowledges that to overcome the present and to escape the Overlook alive she must first overcome her past. Wendy is hit by a realization that neither Jack’s parents nor her mother ever were – the realization that children should not be subjected to violence, but that parents should protect their children no matter the cost:

as she caught sight of her own blood-smeared, horrified face in the medicine cabinet mirror, she was glad. She had never believed that children should be witness to the little quarrels of their parents. And perhaps the thing that was now raving through the

bedroom, overturning things and smashing them, would finally collapse before it could go after her son. Perhaps, she thought, it might be possible for her to inflict even more damage on it . . . kill it, perhaps. (King, *The Shining*, 605).

Wendy acknowledges the supernatural in this instance, accepting that something above her comprehension has consumed her husband. Rather than allow the unnatural to overcome her and instigate further trauma, she fortifies herself with the knowledge that the unexplainable is taking place. She recognizes that Danny has had to endure more than any child should ever have to, that her son has witnessed more violence than either Jack or she could have imagined; but she becomes aware that she can shield him from further trauma by defeating the monster(s) outside. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, in *On Death & Dying*, writes that when a patient's "ability to defend himself physically is getting smaller and smaller, his psychological defenses have to increase manifold. He cannot maintain denial forever" (12-13). Wendy faces death and destruction, but her psychological defenses unite to overcome the obstacles standing between her, Danny, and survival. Trauma disempowers its victims - one of its most obvious traits - yet it also bears the ability to empower those it affects, a trait we observe in Wendy Torrance. A character at first described as shy, scared, and fearful of failure, Wendy Torrance undergoes a metamorphosis while at the Overlook, not allowing the trauma from past violence to wear her down, and instead using all that she has endured to guide her through the trials rained down upon her and her family by the establishment's supernatural forces.

In light of Jack and Wendy Torrance's past encounters with domestic violence and their convergence with events at the Overlook Hotel, I will now turn attention towards Danny Torrance. More than recognizable from the beginning is the fact that there is something separating Danny from his parents and other children his age. King hints at Danny's otherness:

“[h]e understood a great many things about his parents, and he knew that many times they didn’t like his understandings and many other times refused to believe them” (King, *The Shining*, 37). Danny acknowledges his otherworldliness, yet he knows it is not a trait he can let flow freely by, walking around telling people he knows their inner thoughts or has visions. Danny Torrance is a child aware of what makes him different, a child who knows the value of keeping secrets so as not to frighten others. It is not until he meets the Overlook’s cook, Dick Hallorann, that he puts a name to his somewhat hidden talent and learns that he is not alone in his ability. Dick tells Danny, “What you got, son, I call it shinin on, the Bible calls it having visions, and there’s scientists that call it precognition . . . They all mean seeing the future” (King, *The Shining*, 121). Dick reveals that “[m]e, I’ve always called it shining. That’s what my grandmother called it, too. She had it. We used to sit in the kitchen when I was a boy no older than you and have long talks without even openin our mouths (King, *The Shining*, 114). Perhaps for the first time in his life, Danny no longer feels alone, knowing that there are others like him and people he can turn to in moments of solitude or danger. He still fears this “shining” which marks him as unusual, and rightly so as it enhances the trauma he experiences in his time at the Overlook.

As Danny awaits his father’s return from his interview, the reader gains insight into what Danny’s shining entails. Transported into unfamiliar territory, Danny finds himself “in a room filled with strange furniture, a room that was dark . . . His mouth was dry, his eyes like hot marbles, his heart triphammering in his chest . . . Across the room was a mirror . . . a single word appeared . . . and that was REDRUM” (King, *The Shining*, 46). His vision continues fueling fear at the sights that confront him

in his ears he could still hear that huge, contrapuntal booming sound and smell his own urine as he voided himself in the extremity of his terror. He could see that limp hand

dangling over the edge of the tub with blood running down one finger, the third, and that inexplicable word so much more horrible than any of the others: REDRUM. (King, *The Shining*, 48)

At the end of it all “fear had settled around his heart, deep and dreadful, around his heart and around that indecipherable word he had seen in his spirit’s mirror” (King, *The Shining*, 50). In these passages, we grasp the terror awakened inside of Danny, the fear he experiences at knowing there is an unnamable evil awaiting him and his parents in the mountains of Colorado.

Roger Luckhurst writes on King’s writing and finds that “traumatic motifs . . . cut across the narrative in distinct typographic intrusions . . . This scene is coming, it is what propels the narrative, but it has also already taken place . . . It also indicates that King will always associate supernatural capacities with traumatic origins” (*The Trauma Question* 100). Time and again we stand by as Danny’s shining takes over, filling his mind with images of brutality and death. Danny’s images, along with the flashbacks and voices heard and seen by Jack and Wendy, propel the narrative, driving it forward until trauma, violence, and the supernatural combine for an unforgettable climax. Some of Danny’s visions have already occurred, yet there are some which appear to point to future violence, incurred due to the supernatural forces at play. These intrusions force Danny into action, affecting his emotions, thoughts, and decisions. Such intrusions suggest the possibility of his “shine” manifesting to guide him through these traumatic experiences. It is possible that his supernatural ability presents itself as an aid, a tool to be used when trauma draws near. Luckhurst concludes that “the intrusive or recurrent image, the unbidden flashback . . . abolishes time and reimmerses you in the visual field of the inaugurating traumatic instant” (*The Trauma Question* 147). Danny can only guess as to what these recurring flashbacks and scenes of second sight mean, but what he knows for certain is that these

reoccurring shinings produce overbearing, traumatic scenes of violence that assure him the Overlook is a place of unrelenting pain and suffering.

Danny's shining, or his ability to see into the past and the future along with his capability to read minds, is the main determiner of the violence the child experiences within the supernaturally encroaching Overlook. Apart from the violence experienced at Jack's hands, it is an otherworldly entity that affects Danny so deeply, presenting to him the ways in which violence has haunted the halls of the hotel while revealing what can happen if the act remains unchecked. Yet even with the knowledge that something is not right, Danny is figuratively and literally at a loss. At one point, he expresses his desire to tell his parents of what the shining has shown him, "except he was sure, sooner or later, that they would want to take him away from the hotel. And he wanted desperately to get away from the Overlook. But he also knew that this was his daddy's last chance" (King, *The Shining*, 290). Moreover, Danny knows "[t]hings were worse at the Overlook now. The snow was coming, and when it did, any poor options he had would be abrogated. And after the snow, what? What then, when they were shut in and at the mercy of whatever might have only been toying with them before? (*Come out here and take your medicine!*) What then? REDRUM" (King, *The Shining*, 291). Danny is no stranger to the violence of the past, his and the Overlook's, and cannot ignore the violence awaiting him and his family in the future. He understands the desolation and failure that his family will meet if he chooses to tell Wendy and Jack of his gift and what it has shown him, acknowledging that it will likely be their end; yet Danny remains cognizant of the violence hiding within every empty room, nook, and cranny of the Overlook Hotel.

Judith Herman writes about how "the ordinary response to atrocities is to banish them from consciousness. Certain violations of the social compact are too terrible to utter aloud: this is

the meaning of the word *unspeakable*” (1). Herman acknowledges that traumatic events “generally involve threats to life or bodily integrity, or a close personal encounter with violence and death. They confront human beings with the extremities of helplessness and terror, and evoke the responses of catastrophe (33). All of the above perfectly encapsulate Danny’s position; Danny realizes that his visions have shown him the unimaginable, revealed things that remain unspeakable, and placed him in a position in which the risks of revealing the truth are manifold. Whether the Torrance family remains at the Overlook or flees its halls helplessness and terror linger in their future(s).

When we look to the lives of the Torrance family, Jack, Wendy, and Danny, we can now recognize that domestic violence has landed them in their current position(s). Readers discover how domestic violence has shaped these individuals. Jack’s physical abuse of his son, the emotional and mental abuse Wendy suffered, and Danny’s own confrontations with violence determine how these characters react to events at the Overlook. What we distinguish is how deeply rooted violence is within the Torrance family, discovering its roots have grasped and shaped every member in a different manner. It becomes evident that “[t]he central conflicts of *The Shining* are rooted in human nature and reflect evolutionary recurrent adaptive problems – the problem of balancing conflicting evolved motives, such as motives for selfish status striving versus motives for affiliative nurturing behavior, and the problem of surviving the hostile forces of nature” (Clasen 78). *The Shining* illustrates how a family can overcome and be defeated by shared and separate horrors - horrors that when combined with the supernatural upset an already wavering balance of the past and present. We perceive how King writes of “ordinary, recognizable people,” but ones who “are depicted in psychological complexity and with genuine compassion as they face very dire straits, whether from each other or from supernatural

monsters” (Clasen 76). With pasts full of trauma and minds that struggle to maintain the façade of happiness and invulnerability the Torrances are perfect targets for the Overlook. King invites his “readers and audiences to think about, even to experience vicariously, the horror of male violence in the family, not just as fiction but as frightening and disturbing reality” (Hornbeck 697). As the novel concludes, what readers discover is that “*The Shining* is a horror story because it explores the horror of family violence” (Hornbeck 719). Family violence has landed Jack, Wendy, and Danny at the Overlook, a last resort to save them from divorce and destitution. Family violence has destabilized Jack and haunted him from childhood. Ultimately, *The Shining* explores how family violence can never be forgotten. The true horror of King’s story is the unforgettable features of trauma and violence as King depicts the difficulty in recovering from violence and explores the fear induced by familial violence, as well as the rift it causes. Wendy conducts herself in a manner of meekness, shyness, and fright due to the violence she has endured. And Danny fears what will become of his family due to previous violence combining with the violence of others once they enter the sequestered hotel. In observing how domestic violence evokes trauma, we gain an understanding of how and why Jack, Wendy, and Danny Torrance exist as they do and better grasp the reasons why they succumb to the Overlook’s hold or persevere through it all.

The following chapter delves into Stanley Kubrick’s adaptation of King’s *The Shining*. Contrary to King’s work, Kubrick omits nearly all references to past violence, focusing on the night Danny’s arm was broken without delving further into the family’s past. While King seamlessly integrates tales of the past into his narrative, Kubrick’s film focuses on the violence committed within the halls of the Overlook. Presenting some of the most memorable scenes in cinematic history, Stanley Kubrick chronicles how the Torrance family reacts to scenes of

violence and unimaginable trauma. Kubrick's *The Shining* follows the actions of an already fragile family, whose past is largely unknown to the audience, giving viewers a chance to see how violence eats at the mind. Readers will see how trauma can diminish or increase a character's mental faculties, either reducing or heightening their ability to overcome tremendously distressing situations. In exploring Kubrick's adaptation, the impact of the Overlook Hotel on the Torrance family becomes even more pronounced. The hotel combines the family's history with its own horrific past, ensuring and depicting how neither will ever truly be forgotten. Though Kubrick's film delves less into the past of the family than King's novel, the director showcases how the supernatural further impacts the trauma experienced by an already fragile family unit.

3 THE AFFLICTION OF VIOLENCE: KUBRICK'S THE SHINING AND THE TORRANCE FAMILY'S ABILITY TO COPE WITH TRAUMA

In Kubrick's film, the first question Danny Torrance asks Dick Hallorann, head chef at the Overlook Hotel, is: "Is there something bad here?" (*The Shining*). Danny couldn't have hit the nail more on the head with his question. Having been in the hotel only a handful of hours, the child can already recognize that something is amiss in the halls of the soon-to-be empty resort, his question heightening the suspense viewers feel as they watch the exchange. Stanley Kubrick directed, produced, and contributed to the screenplay of his 1980 adaptation of Stephen King's novel *The Shining*. For nearly four decades, the film has captured audiences with its depictions of horror, violence, and the supernatural. Roger Ebert found the film to be "cold and frightening . . . [a] story with ghosts . . . about madness and the energies it sets loose in an isolated situation primed to magnify them" (Ebert 2006). Anne Billson of *The Guardian* applauds Kubrick's film

as “a masterclass in building tension” but criticizes “the ubiquity of the film’s tropes, the endless quotation and recycling” (Billson 2016). Kubrick’s film certainly focuses on ghosts, though less so than King’s novel, instead preparing viewers for the climax, through its haunting soundtrack and showcasing of familial tension. What remains haunting about Kubrick’s *The Shining* is the domestic violence portrayed and alluded to on screen and off - violence that haunts the characters and propels them into action.

As viewers watch Jack Torrance approach the hotel a sense of isolation begins to set in. The manager of the Overlook, Stuart Ullman, talks of the hotel being known for “its seclusion and scenic beauty,” facets ingrained in the minds of viewers from the film’s opening shots (*The Shining*). With these opening panoramas, Kubrick highlights the remoteness of the location, beginning to demonstrate the desolation that such a locale might produce. The image of Jack Torrance’s yellow Volkswagen disappears against the beauty and size of the landscape. The Beetle appears miniscule in comparison to the looming, mammoth ridges Jack navigates around, dwarfed by the awe-inspiring scenery. Of Kubrick’s opening shots, Roger Luckhurst writes, “[t]he yellow VW Beetle struggles up the gradient of the mountain road on a startlingly calm and clear autumn day. The camera swoops over the car like a bird of prey toying with a hapless mouse” (*The Shining*, 12). Kubrick’s opening shows the beginnings of a struggle that leads viewers to wonder whether the vehicle will even arrive at its destination unscathed. When the camera finally alights on the Overlook Hotel the car is once more overshadowed by the hulking structure. What Kubrick achieves in these opening shots is a sense of nature’s transcendence and dominance of the human; viewers will come to see that the characters of the film are continuously trumped by outside and supernatural forces just as Jack’s tiny Beetle was eclipsed by the unforgiving terrain it navigated through. The supernatural elements lurking within the

Overlook overwhelm Jack similar to the way in which the Beetle is overwhelmed by its environment. Ultimately, the scenery serves as a foreshadowing of what is to come. Viewers may think back on how miniscule the vehicle appears when shown against the terrain as Jack becomes buried underneath the forces of the hotel. The topography of the Overlook becomes almost unimaginable just as the paranormal forces at work seem inconceivable. Kubrick's *The Shining* becomes a story about a family attempting to overcome forces beyond their control that overwhelm them at every turn.

Similar to the man portrayed in King's source material, Jack Nicholson's version of Torrance comes across as a bit unhinged from the beginning.¹ Sitting in Ullman's office, he speaks of looking for a change while smiling almost maniacally, "suppressing something, a coiled rage" (Luckhurst, *The Shining*, 36). In an excerpt from the memoir of Emilio D'Alessandro, Kubrick's assistant, the former racecar driver says of Nicholson, "I completely agreed with Stanley when he said that Jack was born to play that part. Jack realized this himself, too, and he enjoyed every minute of it" ("Stanley Kubrick's Assistant" 2016). A few years after his first Academy Award win for *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, Nicholson embodies Jack Torrance, portraying a man who appears just one step away from madness and sets viewers up for an explosive, violent climax. Watching the Torrance family's journey to the Overlook, Jack appears irritated at his wife's musings, but that irritation seems to fade when the Donner Party is brought into discussion. Jack tells Danny about the infamous group, saying "they got snowbound one winter in the mountains. They had to resort to cannibalism in order to stay alive." But when Wendy criticizes Jack's tale, he spares her a short glare, taking up an unsettling grin seconds later when he can retort, "[s]ee, it's okay. He saw it on the television" (*The Shining*). Viewers get

¹ From this point forward any mention of Jack Nicholson will be denoted by his surname so as not to cause confusion between the actor and the character, Jack, he portrays in the film.

the sense that Jack becomes vexed about the most mundane actions, yet when a mention of violence comes into the discussion he is right there at the forefront of the shot. From the beginning, Nicholson plays Jack Torrance in a manner that reveals just how on the edge the character is, how he hangs onto the precipice of sanity seemingly waiting to descend into a bout of violence precipitated by madness.

In King's novel, readers find themselves able to sympathize with Jack and understand, on some level, the pain and regret he has experienced for prior actions, particularly his hurting of Danny; yet in Kubrick's adaptation nearly all of these characterizations are removed from Jack, leaving viewers less likely to see the character as worthy of their concern or pity. We never see Jack engage in any form of maintenance work; the only shot Kubrick includes in this vein portrays Wendy checking the boilers in the basement. Rather than focus on Jack's custodial duties, Kubrick shows us a character caught up in his craft of writing, who, concerned with finishing his play, foregoes spending time with his family in favor of long hours in front of a typewriter. Brandon Benevento believes that Jack's work "offers other possibilities: peace, family and contentment," but while Jack appears to achieve some level of peace and contentment in the hotel, at least initially the family aspect is never grasped (734). He sequesters himself in writing instead of the work he initially signed up for as winter caretaker. Sitting at his desk day in and day out erases all notions of Jack Torrance as a family man, which ultimately destroys any initial hope of his attaining peace and contentment. Slowly, we begin to witness Jack's possession and watch as the Overlook consumes and transforms him into a practical stranger to Wendy and Danny. At one point, he admits to Wendy, "I've never been this happy or comfortable anywhere," but then adds, "I fell in love with it right away. When I came up here for my interview, it was as though I'd been here before. I mean, we all have moments of *déjà vu*, but

this was ridiculous. It was almost as though I knew what was going to be around every corner” (*The Shining*). Viewers can mark this revelation as the point in Kubrick’s film where the plot begins its rising action, and where the buildup to a monumental climax begins with the suggestion that there is something not quite right with Jack Torrance.

Jack soon becomes a slave to his writing, and consequently, a slave to the hotel’s bidding. When Wendy approaches Jack as he writes, viewers catch a glimpse of a large book sitting next to the typewriter; this book no doubt represents the scrapbook from King’s source material that Jack finds in the basement and which reveals the Overlook’s gritty, violent history. As if she is speaking to a stranger, Wendy struggles to communicate with her husband, informing him of the impending snow only to receive an exasperated “What do you want me to do about it?” in return. Accused of being “grouchy” Jack irksomely lets her know that all he wants is “to finish my work” before descending into a tirade

Now we’re going to make a new rule. Whenever I’m in here, and you hear me typing, or whether you don’t hear me typing, whatever the fuck you hear me doing in here, when I’m in here that means that I am working. That means don’t come in. Now do you think you can handle that? . . . Why don’t you start right now and get the fuck out of here? (*The Shining*)

The audience is now primed for further explosions from Jack. When Danny finds his father staring out of the window from the bed in the family’s apartment, Jack, revealing to his son how tired he is, tells Danny he can’t sleep because “I have too much to do.” Jack lets Danny know how much he enjoys the Overlook, saying, “I wish we could stay here forever and ever,” as if he is contemplating how to make that dream become a reality (*The Shining*). Throughout the scene, Danny could not appear more uncomfortable and that discomfort translates to the viewer, who

becomes increasingly wary of Jack and readies for him to finally snap. The disturbing grin that slowly grows on his face translates into nothing more than a feeling that catastrophe can be the only thing awaiting the family.

Yet viewers may find themselves believing that just maybe not all hope is lost when it comes to Jack Torrance. When Wendy discovers Jack in the midst of a nightmare, and wakes him from his dream, he falls from his chair to the floor, clearly disoriented and frightened. Sputtering through his words, he tells Wendy, “I had the most terrible nightmare I ever had. It was the most horrible dream I ever had . . . I dreamed that I – that I killed you and Danny. But I didn’t just kill you. I cut you up into little pieces. Oh . . . my god. I must be losing my mind” (*The Shining*). Jack’s dismay at his own mental state suggests he is still capable of resisting the Overlook’s hold on him, yet that suggestion is almost immediately countered when Danny wanders into the room after entering Room 237 with a torn sweater and shirt, a large bruise covering his neck and face. All Jack can do is helplessly mutter “no” as Wendy screams “You did this to him, didn’t you?” before she ushers Danny away (*The Shining*). The trauma in these scenes derives from the hopelessness experienced by all three members of the family. Jack remains horrified at his dream and at the thought he could inflict such violence upon his family. Wendy is frightened at the idea that she has allowed Jack to harm Danny once again, while Danny remains nothing more than a stoic child, forced into hiding by what he has witnessed in Room 237. Luckhurst tells readers “[a]buse acts as the shattering event that lies buried and forgotten, yet pristinely preserved” (*The Trauma Question* 40). Jack’s dream will remain preserved in his memory, and while he may at times forget its existence his nightmare will endure. Wendy, on the other hand, has done her best to forget Jack’s past transgressions, but when Danny enters the room bruised and frightened all of her memories come rushing to the

front of her mind and she instinctively places the blame on her husband. Meanwhile, Danny attempts to bury and forget what has taken place, appearing comatose and lifeless as he tries to recover from the violence he has observed. All three members react to trauma in differing ways yet illustrate how violence demands a reaction.

Jack's final descent begins upon his first visit to the Overlook's bar. He enters the Overlook's Gold Room after Wendy's accusations, beckoned towards the empty space by the temptation of a drink even though he knows the hotel has been emptied of all alcohol. Talking of all he'd give for just one drink, Jack places his hands over his eyes, raking them down his face seconds later to find a man bedecked in a red velvet coat and black bow tie, smiling knowingly at Jack. The bar is now fully stocked, and Jack greets the bartender named Lloyd who quickly places a glass of Jack Daniel's bourbon in front of the caretaker. Drinking the glass in one gulp, Jack speaks of handling "the old sperm bank upstairs," sipping on his second glass of bourbon before diving into details of the night Danny's arm was broken:

I never laid a hand on him, goddammit. I didn't. I wouldn't touch one hair on his goddamn little head. I love the little son of a bitch. I'd do anything for him . . . But that bitch as long as I live, she'll never let me forget what happened. I did hurt him once. It was an accident. Completely unintentional. It could have happened to anybody . . . The little fucker had thrown all my papers all over the floor. All I tried to do was pull him up! A momentary loss of muscular coordination. All right? (*The Shining*)

There is regret in Jack's words, but that regret could be harbored towards his actions and the pain he caused his family or could be regret for himself and the fact that he will never truly escape or return from that night. By revealing how he feels about the situation, Jack shows how a particular instance of trauma has shaped him and other's opinions about him. Luckhurst writes "[t]he plots

of trauma narratives can belatedly and magically reconfigure entire life stories” (*The Trauma Question* 88). To Wendy, Jack now exists as a husband who let his anger get the best of him, a man who inflicted physical violence on their son. Consequently, Jack’s entire life has been reconfigured due to this moment. He will never overcome that loss of control and will never be allowed to forget his actions. Jack Torrance is shaped by such a moment and feels that regardless of anything else he will always be seen as a man who broke his son’s arm in a drunken rage. While Jack’s recounting of that unforgettable night remains one of Kubrick’s most memorable scenes in *The Shining*, it is followed not long after by an equally horrific tale of violence.

After Jack’s encounter with the entity in Room 237, he steadfastly replies to Wendy’s pleas to leave the hotel with “Wendy, I’ve let you fuck up my life so far but I am not going to let you fuck this up.” Jack then marches through the kitchen, throwing dishes and all manner of items to the ground as he heads once more towards the Gold Room, called there by singing and the balloons and confetti strewn across the lobby (*The Shining*). The attendants don dress typical of the 1930s or 40s, butlers greeting Jack as “Mr. Torrance” as he meanders to the bar, finding out from Lloyd that his “money’s no good here. Orders from the house.” Beginning to circle the room, Jack and a waiter collide, Advocaat slipping down Jack’s jacket. He is quickly beckoned into the bathroom, where the red of the walls calls to mind the image of blood dripping. Here Jack discovers the waiter to be Delbert Grady, who informs Jack “You’ve always been the caretaker. I should know, sir. I’ve always been here” (*The Shining*). Grady warns Jack of Danny’s interference with the Overlook’s plans, informing the current caretaker of his son’s great talent and his attempt to bring in outside forces. Finally, we get an acknowledgement that truly allows us to see Jack is speaking with Delbert Grady when the tuxedo clad waiter reveals, “My girls, sir, they didn’t care for the Overlook at first. One of them actually stole a pack of

matches and tried to burn it down. But I corrected them, sir. And when my wife tried to prevent me from doing my duty, I corrected her” (*The Shining*). Even Jack appears uncomfortable at this admission, laughing uneasily as Grady finishes his tale. With Jack’s appearances in the Gold Room, we are able to discern his predilection for drink while finally learning what happened the night Danny’s arm was broken. We also hear of the other violence that has occurred in the Overlook’s rooms with Grady’s admittance illustrating how disconcerting and traumatic violence can be on its victims, perpetrators, and outsiders. In these moments, the supernatural truly begins to reign supreme. It uncovers true horrors, reveals moments of devastating violence, and makes Jack begin to question all that surrounds him. The supernatural instigates further trauma and violence, divulging how it has worked on the minds of the hotel’s inhabitants and guided them to brutality.

Jack’s actions and the tales of violence we hear from him and other characters are shocking no doubt, and one of the most striking features of Stanley Kubrick’s *The Shining*, but what they truly show is how debilitating the act of harming others is as can be seen in Jack’s reaction to hurting Danny. In *The Trauma Question*, Roger Luckhurst states “It is of course necessary to overcome a pathological relation of the traumatic past, to be relieved of its violent insistence, in order to recover a sense of self and the possibility of community, but this cannot be done by a simple forgetting, since such exorbitant violence will continue to haunt the polity” (96). Jack Torrance will never fully recover from the violence he inflicted on his son. Wendy will never allow Jack to forget his outburst, as viewers see during her outburst after discovering Danny’s bruises, but neither will he because he himself is haunted by what he was capable of in that moment. That night of violence inflicted trauma on the family as individuals and a collective, creating a wall of distrust, fright, and suspicion that will never be breached. Unlike

the Jack Torrance in King's novel, viewers learn little to nothing of Jack's past beyond the night of Danny's injury. For Jack, that night has become an instigator of trauma, "a devastating disruption," that can never be overcome (Luckhurst, *The Trauma Question*, 79). Luckhurst describes the scene where Jack recalls that night as "Nicholson at his mercurial best . . . The gesture that recalls how he snaps the bone of his son is brilliant: at once a confession but a weasily refusal to speak it, a snap that turns into a contemptuous flinging away of any responsibility" (*The Shining*, 59). Jack hides his feelings and hides his desire to condemn his own actions. He yearns to confess his sins, but something inside of him restricts him from truly coming to terms with his actions. Thinking back to earlier moments in the film, it becomes easier to understand why Jack appears unhinged and becomes annoyed over the littlest things. The life of Jack Torrance that Kubrick portrays is one that has been disrupted by solitary, monumental moment of trauma – the night Jack broke Danny's arm. Jack will never overcome this event, especially as he never divulges his true thoughts on that night, except to imaginary bartenders. He reveals how violence has distorted his ability to disclose his emotions and recover from the past, rendering him incapable of overcoming the trauma he has experienced and instigated.

Judith Herman states, "traumatic events ultimately refuse to be put away. At some point the memory of the trauma is bound to return, demanding attention" (174). We see this in the way Jack turns back to alcohol to dull his emotions. Shortly after that first glass has been consumed, he lashes out at his absent wife, angry that she will never let him forget what he has done. He attempts to exonerate himself by claiming, "I wouldn't touch one hair on his goddamn little head" and insists "It was an accident. Completely unintentional" (*The Shining*). Jack continuously attempts to deny his actions were consciously chosen and wants to believe that he would never purposely harm his child. Months of hiding the effects of trauma, of denying that he

has become a perpetrator of violence build up and bubble under the surface waiting to be revealed, and for viewers this is noticeable right from the opening interview with Stuart Ullman. Van der Kolk tells us “It takes tremendous energy to keep functioning while carrying the memory of terror, and the shame of utter weakness and vulnerability” (2). Jack’s moments of irritation and instability begin to make sense in light of Van der Kolk’s explanation. What Kubrick shows his viewers is a man so weighed down by his actions that he struggles to function and carry on as normal.

If Jack Torrance can be recognized as an unstable man on the cusp of derangement, his wife Wendy is his antithesis. Portrayed by Shelley Duval, Wendy is a black haired, brown-eyed wisp of a woman. Her first scene finds her reading *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger, a novel that exhibits the same feelings of isolation and being adrift that we come to imagine Wendy likely feels. Over peanut butter and jelly sandwiches in their Boulder apartment, Wendy and Danny discuss their likely relocation to the Overlook Hotel, including Tony, Danny’s imaginary friend in their conversation. Dressed in an ankle-length, blue dress with a long-sleeved, red shirt beneath, her appearance brings to mind the popular Raggedy Ann doll, Duvall’s choppy hairstyle and wide eyes only adding to the resemblance. Her scruffy and unfashionable aspects, a swift departure from King’s blonde character that men can’t help but turn to look at, paints a picture of a disheveled woman in a state of confusion.

When Danny collapses from an “episode”, Wendy calls on a doctor to visit her son, visibly relaxing when the older woman tells the mother there is nothing to be afraid of. Yet upon the doctor questioning whether the appearance of Tony coincided with the family’s arrival in Boulder the atmosphere changes. Wendy reveals “I guess Danny started talking to Tony about the time we put him in nursery school,” letting the doctor know, “[h]e didn’t like it at first, and

then he had an injury, so we kept him out for a while” (*The Shining*). The doctor questions what type of injury Danny sustained, learning from Wendy that:

Uh, he dislocated his shoulder . . . Well, it was just one of those things, you know? Purely an accident. Um, my husband, had, uh, been drinking. And he came about three hours late, so he wasn’t exactly in the greatest mood that night. And, uh, well, Danny had scattered some of his school papers all over the room, and my husband grabbing his arm, you know, to pull him away from them. It’s just the sort of thing you do a hundred times with a child, you know, in the park or in the streets, but on this particular occasion, my husband just used too much strength, and he injured Danny’s arm. Anyway something good did come out of it all, because he said “Wendy, I’m never going to touch another drop, and if I you can leave me.” And he didn’t, and he hasn’t had any alcohol in five months. (*The Shining*)

She attempts to smile through this recollection, trying to persuade the doctor, and perhaps even herself, that everything is better now; the whole night was purely an accident that will never happen again. But looking into Wendy’s eyes, we discern a fear and discomfort - fear that it was not a one-time offense and a discomfort at knowing things will never be as they once were. In these first scenes of Wendy’s, we find a mother greatly concerned for her son’s welfare and a woman that is clearly tormented by past events.

For the most part, however, when we see Wendy we see a cheerful mother and wife, trying to make the best of her situation. Kubrick’s Wendy is not a woman haunted by a mother’s emotional and mental abuse, but rather a wife haunted by the abuse inflicted on her son by her husband. She appears enamored with the thought of spending the winter at the Overlook, possibly imagining it will provide her family with time to heal and overcome the damaging

aspects of the previous years. As she and Jack tour the establishment with Ullman, she lets her wonder at the place be known, “Oh, it’s beautiful! My god this place is fantastic . . . it’s probably the most gorgeous hotel I’ve ever seen.” There’s just a slight unease detectable when she tells head chef Dick Hallorann, “This whole place is such an enormous maze I feel like I’ll have to leave a trail of bread crumbs every time I come in” (*The Shining*). With Kubrick’s film divided into ten parts, Wendy’s life continues as if all is well in her family’s world atop the mountain for the first two and a half parts. We notice that almost every scene shared between Danny and Wendy, the child’s hand remains firmly grasped in his mothers, representing her attempt to keep him safe and keep him close. The smile that we always find Wendy possessing fades only after the scene described earlier in which Jack berates her for disturbing him at his work. It is during this conversation, if it can be called such, that Wendy recognizes changes are taking place in the hotel, and not the changes she so longed for.

The ninth part of Kubrick’s film is the point at which things truly go awry. In search of her husband with baseball bat in hand, Wendy becomes horrified to discover what it is Jack’s been working on all this time. Standing in front of his typewriter and paper tray, she discovers pages upon pages bearing the phrase “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy” (*The Shining*). To the sound of string instruments shrieking, Wendy becomes more and more perturbed as she flips through the pages, but her fright comes to a head when Jack appears behind her questioning “How do you like it?” (*The Shining*). Kubrick shows the fear spurred by the thought of domestic violence. Jack’s face reveals sinister intentions, his tone depicting him as standing on the cusp of harm. Wendy stumbles and stutters in fright, swinging the bat fruitlessly in front of her, repeating to Jack “Stay away from me,” begging him “[d]on’t hurt me.” For Wendy, it truly becomes a matter of survival when Jack spits out, “I’m not going to hurt you.

You didn't let me finish my sentence. I said, I'm not going to hurt you, I'm just going to bash your brains in" (*The Shining*). Swinging the bat in an attempt to keep Jack away as he follows her up the stairs, she finally makes contact, hitting first his hand and then knocking him in the head, which causes him to fall to the bottom of the stairs unconscious. Kubrick shows viewers how frantic an individual can become when confronted with violence, how the thought of trauma and pain can render them apprehensive and ready to strike back.

Wendy has taken charge, standing up for herself when it truly matters and fighting back. Smart enough to lock Jack in the storeroom, Wendy fumbles to unlock the door, crying helplessly as she is forced to imprison her husband. Wendy keeps a clear head for the rest of the film, putting Danny before herself, pushing him out of the bathroom window as Jack hacks through the door even when she knows she can't follow. Yet with nearly every step she takes she stumbles, her nerves getting the best of her as she fights for survival. She is scared out of her mind, and rightly so, screaming in terror when she runs into the hotel's lobby to discover it covered in spider webs, skeletons filling the chairs and couches. It is here that the supernatural appears, initiating trauma and violence, and furthering the inescapability of each. It is Wendy, running in her robe with knife in hand, who witnesses blood gush from the elevators, her eyes widening, visibly shaking as the lobby is flooded by the red fluid. For all of her terror and clumsiness, Wendy manages to make it out alive with her son in tow. She has experienced more violence and terror than anyone could imagine and viewers are left to consider the differences between the Wendy presented at the beginning of the film and the Wendy shown at its conclusion.

The Wendy Torrance portrayed by Shelley Duvall under the direction of Stanley Kubrick is far removed from the Wendy found in Stephen King's novel. Duvall's Wendy proceeds

skittishly and somewhat unaware through life. A mother who truly cares for her son and husband, it's not hard to wonder whether her unawareness is a true characteristic or feigned ignorance of things crumbling around her. Luckhurst describes traumatic events as "something unprecedented that blasts open the membrane and floods the cell with foreign matter, leaving the cell overwhelmed and trying to repair the damage" (*The Trauma Question* 9). Wendy has been overwhelmed by everything she has endured. From Jack's violence towards Danny, the mental and emotional belittling by her husband, and the supernatural occurrences she experiences in the Overlook, Wendy has encountered more violence than one can imagine. Concerning traumatic events, Laura S. Brown finds that "[c]ategories of symptoms follow . . . avoidance symptoms, the marks of psychic numbing . . . a distracted mind" (100). Viewers watch as Wendy exhibits all of the mentioned effects of trauma. She has withdrawn herself from the experience of Danny's arm being broken, thinking of the good that came from that night, Jack's soberness, instead of the chasm it opened in her family. She avoids confrontation, never speaking to Jack of the tone he takes or how he seems annoyed with nearly every word she speaks. Lastly, Wendy always comes across as being a bit distracted. We see this in the way she fumbles to open the door to the storeroom, forgetting to unlock it before trying to open it.

So many of Wendy's actions illustrate how trauma has infected her, like symptoms of a disease, appearing here and there at the most cumbersome of moments. She never seems to analyze her husband's actions, going along with whatever it is he says or desires as if she's in another world. Kai Erikson states after experiencing a traumatic event "nervous activity takes place against a numbed gray background of depression, feelings of helplessness, and a general closing off of the spirit, as the mind tries to insulate itself from further harm" (184). In Kubrick's *The Shining*, we are presented with a woman forced to retreat into herself; it's as if there's

always something missing in Wendy's eyes, a spark, a fire, and a joy for life. It is clear she loves her son, that she cares for her husband, but her mannerisms paint her as too scared to stand up for herself and incite further violence. She tries to look to the positive because the negatives will only produce further burdens on her and her family, though she discovers at the Overlook that nothing will save them from the hotel's grasp. For the Torrance family, the Overlook Hotel was seen as a chance at domestic bliss and family renewal, yet came to represent a warning for the inevitability of domestic violence. A place that is no stranger to violence, the Overlook shows viewers how violence becomes almost guaranteed when an already fragile family unit must face others and their own shocking pasts.

The reader's first image of Danny Torrance doesn't paint him as a child far removed from other children his age. The introduction of his "imaginary friend," Tony, appears to show his creativity and ability to entertain himself. It quickly becomes evident, however, that there is something special about Danny. Viewers see him standing in front of the bathroom mirror after lunch, in the midst of a conversation with Tony; Tony tells him that Jack will be calling soon to let Wendy know he's gotten the job as winter caretaker at the Overlook Hotel. Danny then asks Tony why he doesn't want to go to the Overlook, and after Danny repeats the question we are treated to our first glimpse of blood gushing from the elevators in the Overlook's lobby. The vision cuts to a glimpse of the Grady twins before showing Danny wide-eyed, his mouth open in a silent scream. Kubrick leaves it to the audience to guess that Danny collapsed after his vision, since the next scene shows him in bed being examined by the doctor Wendy has called to the home. Gained from these first scenes of Danny is the knowledge that Tony is more than an imaginary friend and that Danny is more than an ordinary child; there is something special about

him that sets him apart from nearly all others, and something that will both help him during his time at the hotel and make him more susceptible to its spells.

In one scene, Danny sits across from Dick Hallorann, who he soon learns has a gift just like him. Danny finally gets an explanation for his gift, Dick telling him, “I can remember when I was a little boy, my grandmother and I could hold conversations entirely without ever opening our mouths. She called it shining. And for a long time, I thought just the two of us had the shine to us, just like you probably thought you was the only one.” Danny describes his visions as “[i]t’s like I go to sleep, and he shows me things. But when I wake up, I can’t remember anything” (*The Shining*). In this scene, Danny provides Dick and the film’s viewers with information that allows them to understand, to some degree, how his “shining” works. Danny’s ability extends above and beyond Dick’s, allowing him to see into the past and the future, warning him of what was and what is to come.

Danny sometimes lets his curiosity get the better of him as is witnessed when he ventures into Room 237, even after Dick warned him against straying into the room. The first time we see Danny come across the suite is during one of his tricycle rides, stopping and staring at the door before trying to open it. Viewers may experience a sense of relief when the door does not budge, the split second shot of the Grady twins that occurs afterwards alluding to the fact that nothing good can come from within the room’s depths. Sometime later, as he plays with his toy cars, a ball rolls down the hallway towards him, distracting him from his game. When he rises up to wander down the hall, Danny discovers the once locked door of Room 237 is now open, the key sitting in the lock like someone has opened it for him. Kubrick never shows his audience what takes place during Danny’s venture into the suite, but Wendy later tells Jack that a woman attacked their son. When Danny wanders into the Colorado Lounge where Wendy is lifting Jack

back into his chair there is something out of sorts about the child. His Apollo 11 sweater and shirt are torn, a bruise and what look like scratch marks detectable on the side of his face. The next time we see Danny, he is sitting in bed, shaking as if in the throes of a seizure, while at the same time his father is investigating Room 237. After Jack tells Wendy there was nothing hidden in the room, even though we know differently, Danny sees REDRUM written on the door in red, and as Wendy suggests the family leave his mouth falls open in an open screen, Kubrick splicing in shots of blood gushing once more from the elevators. While what Danny experienced in Room 237 still remains a mystery, the proceeding scenes show that the occurrence will never fully leave him, serving to further the violence and the film's plot.

While Jack sequesters himself in the bar, Danny sits in his room, shouting "REDRUM," causing Wendy to come running to see what is wrong. When she asks if he is having a bad dream, it is Tony who replies "Danny's not here, Mrs. Torrance . . . Danny can't wake up, Mrs. Torrance . . . Danny's gone away, Mrs. Torrance" (*The Shining*). We then find Danny watching cartoons with his mother, though his silent, still form shows that all is not well. It's Tony who replies to Wendy when she tells him she's going to talk to Jack, Tony at once shielding Danny from further trauma as we think back to the earlier conversation he had with Dick when he said "I wake up, I can't remember anything" (*The Shining*). Luckhurst finds "Danny winks out of existence, appearing for much of the rest of the film in a traumatised state as his dissociated alter ego Tony" (*The Shining* 58). Danny dissociates himself, after he escapes Room 237, yet viewers still get the sense that some semblance of the child remains. Even though it becomes distressing to watch Danny from this point forward, particularly to observe him pick up the knife Wendy has grabbed from the kitchen and write REDRUM on the bathroom doorway while croaking out the word the entire time, it never feels like Danny has truly left. Only once he has fled from the hotel

through the bathroom window, safely eluding his father's murderous ambitions, and thwarted Jack's attempts to find him in the maze, does he truly reappear. His cries of "Mommy" as he runs out of the maze towards Wendy reveal his fear and an end to Tony's hold, yet viewers imagine Danny knew the entire time just what he was running from and towards. While Danny escapes from the Overlook with only the bruises and scratches he suffered in Room 237, we are left to wonder what the mental toll will be. How much trauma has Tony saved him from? Will the images of blood flowing from the elevators and the Grady twins continue to haunt him even when the events of the winter are long past?

It is possible to believe that Danny Torrance endures more trauma and violence than either of his parents during the family's time in the Overlook Hotel. From his flashbacks, the events that occurred in Room 237, and his escape from his father, Danny has "witnessed" more than imaginable. Witness can be interpreted as both his seeing the event first hand and viewing it through Tony's eyes. Cathy Caruth writes "[t]he flashback, it seems, provides a form of recall that survives at the cost of willed memory or of the very continuity of conscious thought" (152). While Caruth doesn't speak of seeing into the future with her statement, her words help us understand Tony's appearance. Remembering how Danny "can't remember anything" after awakening from a vision or from Tony's possession, it is not farfetched that Tony is Danny's coping mechanism. Tony shields him from horror, figuratively placing him in a safe place to hide him from current events. Herman tells us that "[i]n situations of terror, people spontaneously seek their first source of comfort and protection" (52). Tony may not be a source of comfort as Wendy is, but the imaginary friend is a source of protection and consolation in the sense that Danny may believe no harm will come to him when Tony is around. Kubrick leaves much of Tony's existence up for interpretation, never delving into his appearances as King does;

but after viewing the film we might not be remiss in finding that Tony is Danny's strength. Tony is Danny's shoulder to lean on when the going gets tough, taking over when events become too much for Danny to mentally handle.

Through the course of *The Shining*, Danny is continuously overtaken by flashbacks and flash forwards, the sum of which finally deem him nearly comatose at the point at which Tony takes over. Van der Kolk writes, "[w]hen the brain's alarm system is turned on, it automatically triggers preprogrammed physical escape plans in the oldest parts of the brain . . . the nerves and chemicals that make up our basic brain structure have a direct connection with our body. When the old brain takes over, it partially shuts down the higher brain, our conscious mind, and propels the body to run, hide, fight, or, on occasion, freeze" (54). Basically, Danny shuts down in situations of duress and Tony appears. We know from Wendy's earlier discussion with the doctor that Tony appeared sometime before Jack broke Danny's arm. It is not far-fetched to imagine that Tony appeared to prepare Danny, to become a defense against the violence the imaginary friend intuitively knew was coming. Danny recognized the inevitability of domestic violence, hence the appearance of Tony as a shield against the act. Having already experienced the trauma from one instance of domestic violence, Danny Torrance acknowledges that it is likely not his last confrontation with such behavior. Van der Kolk states "the self can be detached from the body and live a phantom existence on its own" (102). This is exactly what we see in Danny; he is detaching himself from the situation at hand, lessening the burden of trauma. Of course, we see Danny throughout the movie, feeling his terror as he encounters the Grady twins, just as shocked as he is at the image of a hallway strewn in blood and their lifeless bodies on the floor. But when we consider the violence Danny experiences and observe his description of Tony, how much Danny truly witnessed is up for debate. What we can observe is how Danny

cope with violence, how he manages to exhibit strength through his mental capacities and abilities.

Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining* is a film that has withstood the test of time as one of the most memorable exhibitions of terror and horror. From the scene of blood flowing from elevators to the shot of a decomposing body in the bath, Kubrick's adaptation continues to shock viewers. While the horror of such scenes is noteworthy, the knowledge of the violence these scenes suggests is consuming. Violence stalks the members of the Torrance family, spurring them into exhibiting the emotions they do and acting in their own particular manners. The violent action of Jack breaking Danny's arm has had traumatic effects on the family as a collective and as individuals. What Kubrick presents his viewers with is the result of this violence, illustrating how it has never been forgotten and how Jack, Wendy, and Danny take that knowledge and act on it.

4 CONCLUSION

The sight of Jack Nicholson sticking his head through the door exclaiming "Here's Johnny!" will remain one of the most memorable scenes in movie history (*The Shining*). While the scene certainly frightens, it's the notion of what Nicholson is aiming to accomplish that is truly alarming. Using an axe to break down the door, Nicholson's Jack Torrance is determined to reach his wife and son. What violence he plans to wreak upon them viewers can only imagine. Stephen King's *The Shining* and Stanley Kubrick's adaptation encapsulate domestic violence and its ensuing trauma. Both book and film illustrate the boundless reach of domestic violence, confronting the physical, mental, and emotional abuse too many are familiar with.

The Shining details how domestic violence affects individuals from all walks of life - from a seemingly happy, normal family to hotel-goers looking to escape the hustle and bustle of

city life. Violence grips at the hearts of individuals, even those who have never fallen victim to it, evoking fear at the knowledge that such atrocious acts are widespread and leave visible and invisible scars on their victims. Bessel Van der Kolk writes “traumatic experiences do leave traces,” something that becomes apparent as viewers and readers delve into the story of the Torrance family (1). Just as readers and viewers are forced to do, the Torrance family must attune themselves to the knowledge that horror lurks behind every corner. Roger Luckhurst’s statement “trauma disrupts memory, and therefore identity” becomes apparent as the pasts of Jack, Wendy, and Danny are revealed. Readers and viewers watch a lost husband, feeble wife, and isolated child grapple to make sense of their pasts and events that transpire during their stay at Colorado’s Overlook Hotel. The family’s sense of identity and safety has been disrupted by domestic violence, and their attempts to recover from the resulting trauma are hampered by the hotel’s supernatural forces.

The supernatural plays a major role in the violence and trauma experienced by the Torrances. The Overlook Hotel is no stranger to ghosts and paranormal events. King showcases this in the intrusive voice of Jack’s father telling him “[y]ou have to kill him, Jacky, and her, too” (*The Shining* 335). Kubrick details the supernatural forces at work, particularly in the scene concerning Jack’s investigation of Room 237 in which he comes face to face with an unexplainable, grotesque entity. The supernatural serves to explain how past violence and trauma are unforgettable and pushes characters into action. The Overlook ensures that Jack will never forget past events. This can be seen in his discussion with Lloyd detailing the night Danny’s arm was broken during which his anger at the impossibility of forgetting the incident manifests in his words and actions in both novel and film. Whether it be in King’s novel or Kubrick’s film the supernatural furthers the fear of domestic violence and trauma, speaking to the past and the

future by revealing how the most unsuspecting of individuals can fall victim to cruelty. Though it is not hard to imagine isolation such as that provided by the Overlook could provoke the sanest of men to violence, when combined with the unnatural entities and elements at work the Overlook erases every sense of normality and safety. An establishment that should offer a sense of domesticity, normality, and peace the Overlook strives to create chaos and disparity with its seclusion and dredging up of the past.

This project's focus on domestic violence is one many critics have touched on, yet failed to fully analyze. *The Shining* establishes a connection between domestic violence and trauma; the portrayal of violence in the story establishes how trauma is capable of transference and becomes potentially unavoidable. The characters of Jack, Wendy, and Danny constantly recall and anticipate domestic violence and trauma, and while the violence experienced by each individual differs their experiences show the deterministic capabilities of trauma. Violence elicits a response, yet each character responds in contrasting manners. The abuse Jack Torrance witnessed and experienced as a child combined with his emotional abuse of Wendy and physical abuse of Danny eat away at his conscience and leave him irreparable. Contrastingly, rather than remain weak and vulnerable, the violence and trauma Wendy has endured strengthen her resolve to survive, ultimately guiding her to salvation. Danny, after experiencing physical abuse and witnessing unimaginable violence through his visions, safeguards himself by relinquishing control to his "imaginary friend" Tony, trusting him to guide him through his most perilous hours. Every member of the Torrance family differs in their ability to cope and make sense of violence and its subsequent trauma, but their reactions unveil trauma's deterministic capabilities.

In Stephen King's *The Shining* there is an overarching representation of domestic violence as an act capable of affecting multiple generations. As readers learn of Jack and

Wendy's violence-filled pasts they begin to understand how debilitating witnessing violence and becoming a victim of it truly is. With the level of violence the family remembers and observes their choices become influenced by the trauma that has and currently surrounds them. With King delving more into the past, readers see how trauma becomes a determining factor in the way the family respond to events at the Overlook and ultimately flounder or prosper while sequestered within its halls. Unable to reconcile with his past, Jack Torrance falls victim to the Overlook's supernatural presence, allowing it to fully possess him and erase any semblance of the man he once was. Wendy musters her strength, refusing to once again become a victim of domestic violence. Jack and Wendy's son, Danny, whose "shining" makes him more susceptible to violence and trauma, escapes the hotel due to his mother's willingness to place his well-being above her own and with the assistance of Tony who takes over when events become unbearable. Trauma influences how these characters react when faced with the unimaginable, affecting their ability to overcome the obstacles placed in their paths.

Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining* focuses less on the past yet still portrays unimaginable levels of violence and trauma. Kubrick presents viewers with a broken family: a father struggling to make sense of past actions, a mother unsure of the direction her life has taken, and a son whose abilities leave him susceptible to the supernatural forces at work in the Overlook. From shots of blood flowing from elevators, a decomposed corpse in the bathtub of Room 237, or the sight of the Overlook's lobby filled with skeletons and cobwebs Stanley Kubrick leaves viewers waiting to see what horror will be showcased next. As the film progresses, it becomes obvious that the true horror is domestic violence. Wendy shakes in fear when faced with the prospect of falling victim to her husband's abuse, yet summons the strength to protect herself and Danny when she realizes how unavoidable the act is. After witnessing inconceivable horrors, the trauma

becomes unbearable for Danny who allows his “imaginary friend” Tony to take over and guide him to safety. In the end, Kubrick’s film reveals the true terror of violence, showing viewers how the choices individuals make can be determined by the horrors of their past and present.

The Overlook Hotel is an establishment that incites fear, desires violence, and places individuals in inconceivable predicaments. The Torrance family is already on the cusp of breakdown when they enter the establishment’s walls, having endured their fare shares of violence and distress. When the Overlook refuses to let their pasts remain buried and instigates further damage trauma summons a response. Whether Stephen King’s *The Shining* or Stanley Kubrick’s 1980 film are in question both illustrate the deterministic aspects of violence and trauma. As novel and film conclude, on some level, readers and viewers are able to understand how and why characters reacted in such manners. The Torrance family copes with violence in differing ways, and, in the end, their actions are based on their ability to cope with and make sense of brutality and trauma.

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